

PRESS RELEASE

United Nations Development Programme



UNDP teams with Austcare and GTZ to create long-term livelihoods in waste management

Banda Aceh, Indonesia, 10 July -- Turning a recycled piece of plastic or cardboard into a commodity is a popular activity across Aceh, Nias and Simeulue. But how to turn it into a successful and sustainable livelihood? That's the focus of a new UNDP programme implemented by Austcare and GTZ/Cipta Aksi Partisipatif Foundation (CAP).

There is currently a wealth of opportunities for composting, recycling and waste collection activities across Aceh, Nias and Simeulue. But many existing businesses are run by individuals unaware of how to access larger markets, how to be economically sustainable, or how to improve their overall business skills. The UNDP Waste Management Livelihoods Programme will target these issues across Aceh, Nias and Simeulue, and boost livelihoods while promoting sustainable solid waste management.

The 12-month project is the first of its kind in the region, and it's the creation of UNDP's Tsunami Recovery Waste Management Programme (TRWMP). Antun Hidayat, UNDP Programme Coordinator, explains: "Many individuals involved in ad hoc recycling activities are missing the potential for added value, as they don't have the tools or knowledge to grow their business. For example, they are unaware about cost-effective ways to transport materials, or they don't have the equipment to reduce the volume of recyclable materials for more efficient transportation. We'll use our experience to change such issues, and encourage sustainability for the poorest of the poor in several communities."

The UNDP Waste Management Livelihoods Programme will also focus on bringing the value of recycling back to Aceh. For example, instead of transporting recyclable products to Medan for processing, the programme will aim to place processing equipment, such as plastic shredders and metal presses, in Aceh. This will also encourage recycling to reduce the volume of waste going into landfills, and thus increasing the working life of landfills.

UNDP brings extensive experience in composting and recycling to the programme. This includes developing a tsunami wood recycling workshop and pilot composting activities at Banda Aceh's Gampong Jawa dumpsite, as well as composting programmes in Lapang, Meulaboh.

Implementing partners Austcare and CAP/GTZ are now in the initial stages of the new programme, and the beneficiary selection process is underway. Austcare will focus on Banda Aceh; Aceh Jaya; Aceh Barat; Nagan Raya; Nias; Nias Selatan; and Simeulue. CAP/GTZ will cover Bireun and Pidie.

Detailed needs assessments have been carried out to establish focus areas, and a sector coordination working group has been established. This is proving to be a beneficial method of encouraging stakeholder organisations to share their ideas and needs, and to clarify who is working in what capacity.

Thomex Iskandar, Austcare Operations Manager, explains: “This project is an excellent way of promoting sustainability for vulnerable members of the community. Together with UNDP, we’ll work with local people through a combination of financial inputs, technical advice and capacity development. Helping people access bigger markets, and training them on simple but effective business skills such as budget preparation, will go a long way to developing beneficiaries’ sustainable livelihoods.”

Muhammad Rizalsyah, GTZ Project Manager, added: “We realise that it takes a lot to change long-established behavioural patterns in waste disposal. So as well as training beneficiaries in how to manage waste and turn it into cash, we’ll also enable local businesses to operate profitably in the recycling sector; create a stakeholder forum; initiate public awareness campaigns; and integrate relevant local authorities.”

Notes to Editor: The UNDP Tsunami Recovery Waste Management Programme (TRWMP) has proved to be one of UNDP’s most successful projects. What began as a small tsunami and earthquake waste clearance operation in September 2005, has now expanded to a USD14.4 million dollar programme covering eight districts in Aceh and Nias, and supported by the Multi Donor Fund.

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